

Rodney Square Killer Sentenced to 30 Years

*Other defendants face prison for murder,
robbery, weapons,
and sex offenses*

The Wilmington man who stabbed another man to death on Rodney Square will spend the next 30 years in prison or a psychiatric center after being sentenced by a Superior Court judge. In September 2015, Calvin Hooker, 25, stabbed 27-year-old Thomas Cottingham to death in September 2015, after Cottingham intervened when he noticed Hooker, who was waving a knife, chasing a woman pushing her 6-month-old baby in a stroller. In April 2017, Hooker was found guilty but mentally ill on charges of Murder Second Degree, Aggravated Menacing, and Endangering the Welfare of a Child. He was also found guilty on two counts of Possession of a Deadly Weapon During the Commission of a Felony, Carrying a Concealed Deadly Weapon, and Resisting Arrest. Hooker was sentenced to 30 years, followed by 6 months of home confinement, then 13 years of probation. Deputy Attorneys General James Kriner and Annemarie Puit prosecuted the case.

A 21-year-old Wilmington man will spend the rest of his life in custody after being sentenced in Superior Court for the shooting death of his former girlfriend. In August 2016, Idrees Merritt shot 21-year-old Miprecious Lilly Hoskins multiple times in the basement of his parents' home, then disposed of her body in an outside trash bin. Merritt, who pled guilty but mentally ill to Murder First Degree in June, will spend the balance of his natural life in prison or at a psychiatric center. Deputy Attorneys General Cari Chapman and Kelly Sheridan prosecuted the case, with assistance from Chief Investigative Officer Tom Curley of the Wilmington Police

Department, DOJ Investigator Brian Daly, DOJ Social Worker Jenn Kutney-Soper and Domestic Violence Unit paralegal AnnMarie Corrigan.

The final two defendants involved in a 2015 murder have pled guilty in Superior Court. In July 2015, along with three others, Timane Dollard, 26, of New Castle and Miguel Taylor, 26, of Wilmington broke into the garage at a home in the 300 block of Martin Drive in New Castle, and shot and killed 29-year-old Isaias Gonzalez. Another man received gunshot wounds to both legs. Prior to the murder, Dollard and Taylor, along with two others, forced their way into an apartment in the 900 block of Maryland Avenue and held a victim at gunpoint. Dollard pled guilty to Murder Second Degree, two counts of Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony, Robbery First Degree, Home Invasion, Conspiracy First Degree, and Conspiracy Second Degree, and faces a minimum of 30 years in prison when sentenced by a judge later this year. Taylor pled guilty to Murder Second Degree, Robbery First Degree, Assault First Degree, Possession of a Firearm by a Person Prohibited, Possession of a Firearm During the Commission of a Felony, Conspiracy First Degree, and Conspiracy Second Degree. Barred from having a gun because of previous weapons convictions, Taylor faces a minimum of 35 years in prison when sentenced later this year. The three others involved, Damier Walker, 25, of Wilmington, Marquivus Hardy and Zeisha Watters, both 26 from Wilmington, are all awaiting sentencing. Deputy Attorneys General Phillip Casale and Colleen Norris prosecuted the case, with social worker Kristen Fluharty, paralegal Kimberly Moro, and Special Investigator John Ciritella.

A Milford man, already registered as a Tier 2 sex offender for federal charges relating to child pornography, pled guilty to Sex Offender Unlawful Sexual Conduct with a Child. Deputy Attorney General Julie Johnson secured the plea from 57-year-old Eric Tindall in Superior Court. In September 2016, Tindall videotaped a young child wearing underwear. Det. Kevin McKay

of the Delaware State Police was the lead investigator on the case, with assistance from the entire Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) team, including DSP and DOJ investigators and forensic examiners. Tindall faces a minimum of 4 years in prison when sentenced by a judge in October.

A 50-year-old Smyrna man pled guilty in Superior Court to charges involving child pornography. In February 2017, members of the Child Predator Task Force conducted a search warrant at the home of Michael Dennis in the 700 block of Black Diamond Road, and found images of children involved in prohibited sexual acts as defined by Delaware law. Dennis pled guilty to 2 counts of Dealing in Child Pornography and 2 counts of Possession of Child Pornography. Dennis faces at least 4 years in prison when sentenced by a Superior Court judge in October.